

299. Summary on Roman slavery. Chrysostom describes the misbehavior of all classes, about 400 A.D.<sup>1</sup> The colons were overburdened. When they could not pay they were tortured. A colon was flogged, chained, and thrown into prison, where he was forgotten. His wife and child were left in misery to support themselves, and get something for him if they could. The Roman system, after consuming all the rest of the world, began to consume itself. The Roman empire at last had only substituted one kind of slaves for another. Artisans and peasants were now slaves of the state. Slavery was at first a means. By it the subjugated countries were organized into a great state. Then it developed its corruption. It was made to furnish gladiators and harlots. Nowhere else do we see how slavery makes cowards of both slaves and owners as we see it at Rome in the days of glory. Slavery rose to control of the mores. The free men who discussed contemporary civilization groaned over the effects of slavery on the family and on private interests, but they did not see any chance of otherwise getting the work done. Then all the other social institutions and arrangements had to conform to slavery. It controlled the mores, prescribed the ethics, and made the character. In the last century of the Western empire the protest against it ceased. It seemed to be accepted as inevitable, and one of the unavoidable ills of life. It ruled society. Scarcely a man represented the old civilization who can command our respect. The social and civic virtues were dead.

300. In all the ancient world we meet with distinct repudiation of slavery only amongst the Therapeuts, a communistic association amongst the Jews in the last century before Christ.

They were ascetics, each of whom lived in a cell. We first hear of them through Philo Jud<sup>e</sup>eus (*The Contemplative Life*) about the time of the birth of Christ. They had no slaves. They regarded slavery as absolutely contrary to nature. Nature produced all in a state of freedom, but the greed of some had vested some with power over others.<sup>2</sup> The Therapeuts, who included women, did their own work. They carried on no

<sup>1</sup> Horn, on Matthew, 62; Migne, *Patrol. Graec.*, LVIII, 591.

<sup>2</sup> Cook, *Fathers of Jems*, II, 25.